THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SOURCES OF INFORMATION USED BY

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

© DENIS JOSEPH HAUGHEY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Sources of Information
Used by Community College Students," submitted by Denis
Joseph Haughey in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the sources of information used by students prior to their enrolment at two Alberta community colleges. Three sub-problems dealing with the sources of information used, the kinds of information found, and the opinions of students regarding the accuracy of information discovered, were identified. Four dependent variables were used: program, sex, visitation, and time of application.

Data were collected by means of questionnaires distributed to first-year students at two community colleges. In addition, a random sample of first-year students in each college was interviewed. The data were subjected to a statistical treatment that generated frequencies and percentages. Chi-square tests to determine significant differences between the responses of students when classified by the dependent variables were employed.

Results indicated that the sources of Students, College Personnel, High School Personnel, Parents and Family, and College Calendar were ones which students most often used in first finding out about college. Some career students also identified Manpower as a source of first information. Late and not visited applicants relied to a large extent on non-college sources such as Manpower or Students.

Students rated College Calendar as the most important source of information actually used. Females, transfer students, and those who had applied early were particularly supportive of this source; late applicants and those who were not visited also mentioned it as a source

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actually used. For over 60 percent of all students, College Calendar was the source of the main kinds of information discovered.

With the exception of the following items, How College is Administered, Regulations Re Exams and Marks, Attendance Policies and Financial Awards Available, students were aware of items of information presented to them. Those students who had applied early and who had been visited were aware of more items than other respondents.

Many female transfer students who had been visited and who had applied early mentioned College Calendar as their most accurate source of information prior to enrolment. In the case of male students, those who had not been visited, and those who were late applicants, College Personnel and Students were rated as their most accurate source.

While almost all students regarded the information they had received before attending college as being accurate, they were much less certain of the accuracy of their college picture prior to enrolment.

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INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The importance of having access to accurate and current infor-
mation when a decision is to be made is well recognized. Thus stu-
dents, when deciding to attend a particular college, must be adequately
informed about many aspects of the institution in question if their
decisions are to be the best possible. This study examined the infor-
mation sources used by students prior to their enrolment at two Alberta
community colleges.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

There has been an increase in the significance attached to, and
the provisions made for, post-secondary education in Alberta in the
past decade. The college movement, under the guidance of the Alberta
Colleges Commission, has gained strength. This may be in response to
what Medsker (1960:21) has described as the "democratization of educa-
tion" whereby students who are not qualified, or who do not wish to
enter university, are afforded an opportunity of furthering their edu-
cation in a post-secondary institution, the community college.

This broadening of the post-secondary base for education war-
rants a consideration of information provision for a growing body of

potential college students if they are to make the best possible decisions regarding their college choice.

Walton (1968) claims that the key to improvement in the decision-making process is information, while Centra (1971:11) observes that college applicants know less about the colleges to which they apply than the colleges know about students as applicants. Pope (1970:109) also comments on the inadequacy of information provided students, and Thresher (1966:74) refers to the somewhat bewildering task confronting the student who would try to make sense of what information he can get: ". . . the student may not know what information he needs, or how to get the information he wants, or how to use the information he has." Birnbaum (1968:786) notes that the decisions made by students concerning the institutions they will attend are often based on erroneous information, hearsay, and the uninformed comments of parents and friends.

It seems obvious, then, that the question of information sources is one which affects the potential or college-bound student. An awareness of such sources may assist students in finding accurate information and, through enabling better choices, help to reduce the amount of disorientation which might otherwise occur upon their entering the college environment.

College personnel may be assisted in assessing the effectiveness of the college's information media and methods and appropriate changes, if indicated, might help alleviate erroneous conceptions, by students, of the college milieu as a whole.

This study, accordingly, sought to identify the information sources used by students prior to their enrolment at two Alberta com-

munity colleges.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Community College

A two-year, post-secondary, non-degree-granting institution offering transfer or career programs, or both, of one, two, or three years' duration.

Student

Anyone in attendance at a community college and enroled in transfer, career, or non-credit courses.

Transfer Program

A program of university parallel studies, usually of two years' duration.

Career Program

A program of non-university studies, usually of a vocational nature.

ASSUMPTIONS

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1.   College students actually seek and use sources of information.

2.   Students can judge the accuracy of the information obtained.

3.   Sufficiently accurate recall is present to enable students to respond to questionnaire items.

DELIMITATIONS

The study was delimited as follows:

1.   The study involved first-year, full-time students only.

2.   The study was confined to two community colleges in Alberta.

3.   The opinions of other publics were not sought.

LIMITATIONS

The study was subject to the following limitations:

1.   The sources of information listed in the questionnaire may not have included all possible ones.

2.   Students' responses may have inadequately represented their true feelings and impressions.

3.   Flaws in the instrument or study design may have restricted or inhibited accurate replies.

4.   Responses may have constituted a biased sample owing to the lower than anticipated percentage return.

5.   Questionnaire items may have been interpreted differently by respondents in the two colleges.

STUDY DESIGN

The main research problem was further divided into three sub-problems as follows:

1.   What are the sources of information which students used in finding out about their college?

2.   What kinds of information did students find about their college?

3.   How did students rate the accuracy of the information

that they discovered about their college?

To further investigate these sub-problems, a number of depen-

dent and independent variables were identified.

Dependent Variables

Originally six dependent variables were isolated. These were:

(1) Program, (2) Sex, (3) Visitation, (4) Time of application, (5) Age,

and (6) Date of last high school attendance of respondents.

The very high percentage of the respondents falling in the

18-20 age category and the recency of high school attendance led to the

elimination of variables 5 and 6.

Independent Variables

Eight independent variables were considered as follows:

1.   Sources of first information

2.   Sources actually used in deciding to attend the college

3.   Sources of the main kinds of information discovered

4.   Awareness as to specific kinds of information

5.   Most accurate sources of information

6.   Most inaccurate sources of information

7.   Overall accuracy of information received

8.   Overall accuracy of college picture prior to enrolment.

Lists of various information sources were incorporated in the

questionnaire and provision was made for respondents to identify addi-

tional sources, if required.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The remainder of the thesis has been organized in the following manner. A review of the literature is found in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the research procedures employed in the study. Chapter 4 consists of an analysis of the data. The final chapter offers a summary of the study, presents conclusions and implications, and suggests possibilities for further research. Appendix "A" contains a sample questionnaire and correspondence, and Appendix "B" contains a summary of extra information gathered.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will treat four main aspects of information:

1.   Literature dealing with information as a part of communi-
cation theory,

2.   Literature dealing with the responsibilities of institu-
tions in providing potential college students with information,

3.   Literature dealing with the procedures employed by insti-
tutions in providing potential college students with information,

4.   Literature related to studies of influences and lack of
influence on potential college students.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Darnell (1971:5-16) makes the point that men are interdependent
and that there is reciprocity of effect--sometimes by choice and some-
times not--in a variety of different ways, and in varying degrees. It
is important, he claims, that we become aware of all the ways whereby
we influence each other and consider efficiency within the interacting
systems of effect. This leads to a consideration of the process of com-
munication and its importance in influencing people by facilitating the
transmission of information.

Any examination of the process of communication reveals a pre-

ponderance of terms such as signal, message, code, giving and receiving,
transmitting, production, and reception. These terms appear to support
the concept of reciprocity or give and take involved in information
dissemination through communication. Some of the definitions of various
authors would also appear, by implication at least, to support this
concept.

Cherry (1966:5) considered that the process of communication
consists, basically, of the giving of information; Berlo (1960:4)
emphasized the giving, receiving and transmission of information; while
Schramm (1965:3) contended that when communicating we are trying to
share information, an idea, or an attitude. Berlo (1960:14-15) rein-
forced this idea of sharing. He defined any communication system as
involving the *production* of a message by someone, and the *receipt* of
that message by someone.

A recognition of this two-way nature of the information trans-
mission process and an understanding of some of the impediments towards
effective communications may be useful in considering the judgements of
students as to the kinds of information communicated to them. An exami-
nation of a basic communication model may facilitate this.

A Basic Communication Model

Friesen (1968:42) represented Lasswell's description of the
communication process "Who says what, in which channel to whom, with
what effect?" in the following model:

INFORMATION SOURCE - TRANSMITTER - CHANNEL - RECEIVER - DESTINATION
                ENCODING   NOISE   DECODING

In Friesen's view, communication exists whenever one system, a source,
influences another system, a destination, by manipulation of the alter-
native signals which can be carried in the channels connecting them.
The information source can be viewed as producing one or more messages
which are transformed by a transmitter into signals that the channel
can carry. These signals are transformed by the receiver back into
messages which can be accepted at the destination.

The activity of the transmitter is usually referred to as
encoding and that of the receiver as decoding. Anything that produces
distortion of the message as it moves from the source to the destination
is called noise.

In this view (Friesen, 1968:42,45), communication refers to the
process of transmitting meaning from one organism to another. It can
take many forms: words spoken, words written, mathematical symbols,
musical notes, gestures, or even silence. It serves to transmit mes-
sages or information. Failure of effective communication can be blamed
on the sheer mechanics of the process--the choice of the channel, and
the presentation or choice of words or media are significant factors
in communication.

According to Berlo (1960:65), media selection is limited by
(A) availability, (B) money, and (C) the source's preferences: (1) which
channels are received by most people (at the lowest cost), (2) which
channels are most adaptable to the kind of purpose which the source has,
and (3) which channels are most adaptable to the contents of the message.
He claimed that there is scant scientific evidence as to the relative
merits of one or another message vehicle. Bacon (1971:38-39), in
developing a communication model, asserted that if the sender's concept

and the receiver's concept are equivalent, or reasonably similar, the communication has a good chance of being effective, despite the perceptual filters and screens of both sender and receiver. Hovland, Janis and Kelley (1965:103) and Wiles (1967:58-61) mentioned status, fear, trust, confidence, differing values, perceptions, and conflicts of interest as being some of the other barriers towards effective communications.

If, as it appears, the reactions of a receiver are significantly affected by cues about the communicator's intentions, expertness, and trustworthiness, organized information sources must take steps to ensure their credibility if they are to be utilized effectively by information seekers.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTITUTIONS IN PROVIDING POTENTIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH INFORMATION

Research findings suggest that institutions must assume responsibility for ensuring that the various publics which they serve are adequately provided with the information which these publics need to function effectively as part of an interdependent communication network. A review of some of these findings follows.

With reference to educational institutions, a useful set of guidelines appeared in College Board Review (1964-65:10-12) as a statement of college admissions practices and procedures. It attempted to clarify the nature of the interaction between colleges and their student candidates by delineating the roles and responsibilities of those schools and colleges which hold candidate interests to be of greatest importance in the admissions process, and it aimed at "improved communication

between schools and colleges on behalf of the individual student." Some
of the procedures which appear to be pertinent to this study follow:

    I.   Colleges are forthright, accurate, and comprehensive in
interpreting themselves.

        The College:

        5.   Publishes precise statements concerning its
        admissions calendar.

        6.   Publishes precise information about opportunities
        and requirements for financial aid.

   VI.   Colleges make every effort to assist and cooperate with
secondary schools in pre-college counselling.

VIII.   Secondary schools are forthright, accurate, and compre-
hensive in interpreting themselves and their candidates.

   IX.   Secondary schools recognize and protect the best inter-
ests of their candidates.

        A.   The school in the matter of candidate choice among
        colleges:

        1.   Assists the candidate in discovering colleges
        whose programs meet his abilities, needs and
        interests.

    X.   Secondary schools keep themselves informed about the
opportunities for higher education.

        B.   The school:

        1.   Encourages its counsellors and teachers to
        visit colleges.

        2.   Welcomes visits by college representatives.

        C.   The school maintains procedures for acquiring data

about colleges.

    XI.   Secondary schools inform students and their parents about the opportunities for higher education.

    The school:

    1.   Provides a program of counselling which does justice to the college opportunities sought and available.

    2.   Encourages the student and his parents to take the initiative in learning about colleges.

    3.   Invites college representatives to assist in counselling candidates about college opportunities.

    XIII.   Colleges and schools cooperate in evaluating and improving the admission process.

Cameron (1967:118-122) called for an up-dating of guidance and information programs for post-secondary students in the face of institutional failure to provide current data on college climate and environment. On the same theme, Centra (1971:11-13) cited a report of the College Board's Commission on Tests which recognized that the applicant-college relationship needs to be brought into better balance and recommended that the Board "systematically gather and publish relevant information about colleges." Pizzo and McFall (1970:4) called for information provision to all students who have the potential for post-secondary education and concluded that, with proper support from parents and high school personnel, the junior college can assume major responsibility both for what constitutes a realistic educational goal for the individual student and for getting the student to accept such a goal. Lynch and Montaba (1964:49), in an article dealing with the problems of students not emotionally "bound" to attending a college, advocated pre-college

counseling to prevent later upheaval. Reiss and Fox (1968:89)
observed that the information students need from institutions may be
broken down into four categories: (1) information about self, (2) infor-
mation about educational and vocational opportunities, (3) information
about institutions of higher education and admissions criteria, and
(4) information about alternatives open to them and possible
consequences of each.

In the high school context, Herr (1965:47-51) stressed a union
of the information-disseminating and counseling aspects of the counselor
role in pre-college counseling, while Thresher (1966:40) saw the
guidance counselor as having the responsibility for providing the
college bound student with as much wisdom as he can muster. Reiss and
Fox (1968:90) considered that one of the major jobs of the college
counselor is to be informed that he may help students and parents gain
information. Graff and Peters (1969:271-276) reported that the counselor
is viewed as a primary source of educational and occupational materials
and an important disseminator of the information that students need in
making the college decision. They called for a greater portion of
counselor education to involve acquisition of specific data about colleges
since it appears that as junior colleges grow in number, high school
counselors will become important agents in the junior college admissions
process. Soldwedel (1966:45) warned students that the effectiveness of
their school counselor will depend upon his own background of information
and his attempts to keep up to date on everyday changes in the college
scene, and Dyer (1968:109) cautioned that the process of recruitment
and selection of students needs to become better understood. Krongelb
(1968:121) advocated the employment of a college coordinator at

the high school, supported by a staff of advisors and clerical aides
(the latter very often student aides serving as volunteers for service
credit), ministering to the needs of those students who are planning
to go on to college after completing their high school studies.

Krongelb (1968:126) identified a major task of the college
admissions officer as "getting to know as much as possible about the
high schools from which his freshmen are drawn." His responsibilities
include the preparation and distribution of printed materials, the
updating and distribution of supplemental material, and discharging the
college's obligation to keep the public informed, among other things,
about its policies governing admission and the procedures related there
to.

It appears, then, that there are certain specific responsibili-
ties which institutions must accept in guiding future college students.
Some of these have been discussed. The procedures whereby these respon-
sibilities may be implemented are reviewed in the following section.

PROCEDURES EMPLOYED BY INSTITUTIONS IN PROVIDING
POTENTIAL COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH INFORMATION

Centra (1971:11-13), in dealing with the question of how to pre-
sent detailed information to students, advocated the use of computers in
high schools. The computers would contain detailed descriptive infor-
mation about colleges. Reiss and Fox (1968:82-92) saw a place for the
high school in the new field of information storage and retrieval, and
library automation. They pointed out that audio tapes, video tapes,
films, filmstrips, slides, transparencies and recordings as well as
closed-circuit T.V. and Dial Access Retrieval Stations are all part of

the information process. Such systems as the Chronicle College Entrance View-Deck, Colleges at Your Fingertips (CAYF), and the College Suggestor were mentioned as being some information retrieval systems which some institutions are using in consultation with counseling staff. Thresher (1966:38) envisaged long-range public relations programs, publications, bulletins, school visits, college conferences, the importing of students and of school representatives as important means of informing students. Meeth (1970:535-546) advocated use of college staff and faculty as recruiters.

Krongelb (1968:122) saw the college coordinator at a typical high school as informing student through the following procedures:

1.   Gathering, collating, and maintaining various kinds of information concerning college (college bulletins, booklets of information, application materials, directories, etc.).

2.   Publicizing (through classrooms, assemblies, bulletin boards, the school newspaper, periodic bulletins or announce-ments, or by personal contact) the latest information con-cerning the various phases of pre-college guidance.

3.   Arranging assemblies and conferences for pupils, parents and school personnel with college representatives, e.g. the College Night Program.

4.   Advising students of college application procedures, deadlines and other pertinent information.

5.   Maintaining liaison with colleges and universities.

He may also, according to Krongelb, visit colleges, invite col-lege representatives to the high school, read newsletters and other announcements published by the colleges, and engage in mail and tele-

phone communication with them. According to this view point, the college

admissions officer engages in personal contact with schools, conducts

lectures and discussions with parent and community groups, and arranges

for visits to the college campus.

The efficacy of the commonly used procedure of school visi-

tations by college counselors was questioned by Logan (1966:23) in an

article in College Board Review. He claimed that only rarely does a

representative's visit convey relevant information to a school coun-

selor which he couldn't get by perceptively reading the college catalog

and other related publications, or from the growing number of profes-

sional reference materials. Peterson (1968:8-18) also questioned the

value of the practice.

Thresher (1966:64) contended that in one sense college under-

graduates can offer the best educational guidance to prospective stu-

dents, and Centra (1971:13), in advocating that students have the poten-

tial to play a key part in furnishing information, claimed that less

freshman disillusionment and lower college attrition rates could result

from greater use of students as information providers . Meeth (1970:

535-546) urged the use of students as college representatives to poten-

tial college students, while Smith (1970:33-36) in the Junior College

Journal reported the use of high school students as information agents

for Miami-Dade Junior College. Colleges might well consider cultivating

more fully this source of information.

Some of the procedures by which institutions discharge, or may

discharge their responsibilities in informing students, have been identi-

fied. The extent to which students avail themselves of information

sources is discussed in the next section.

LITERATURE RELATED TO STUDIES OF INFLUENCES
AND LACK OF INFLUENCE ON POTENTIAL
COLLEGE STUDENTS

Not many studies were uncovered that sought specifically to measure the accuracy of personnel or media as information sources. Most of the studies attempted to delineate those persons or media who influenced students in the college decision-making process.

It seems appropriate, though, that those institutions that seek to disseminate knowledge about themselves to potential college students, as an aid in the college decision-making process, be aware of what forces are most influential with students. An examination of the role of friends, counselors, and media appears to be warranted.

That some students appear to be under a minimum of influence from their chosen post-secondary institution is evident from the number who apply late or who enter displaying ignorance of their chosen institution. An awareness of this situation might further aid institutions in planning more effective use of their information sources. Accordingly, the factors of late decisions and student ignorance are also examined.

The Role of Friends

Though Thresher (1966:37), Pope (1970:109), and Trent (1965:9), cited propinquity as a powerful factor in influencing college selection, the role of friends also appears to be very important. According to Pope (1970:109), one of the principal criteria in a high school student's choice of college is what he's heard about it from his peers and family. Schuerger (1970:12) stated that in the ordinary course of events, peers

are one of the important influences on students. Trent (1965:9) cited
a study in which the second of three main reasons why students picked
their college was that of peer popularity. Thresher (1966:71) reported
that the chief influence on students is exerted by or mediated through
their peer groups who generate or apply most of the "press." Knoell
(1970:88) showed the increasingly greater role of friends in influencing
black high school graduates and in transmitting whatever information
was gained about college. Hanchey (1969), in a study designed, in part,
to identify persons who influence vocational choices, compared the
importance of friends, among others, in swaying students' choices.
Pizzo and McFall (1970) underscored the importance of friends in empha-
sizing that, for students, the final year in high school is still crucial
in deciding to pursue post-high school education, and in selecting an
institution to attend.

It would appear, then, that friends are one important source of
influence for prospective post-secondary students.

The Role of the Counselor

Research findings appear to be at odds regarding the importance
of the counselor in influencing students regarding the college decision.

Roemmich and Schmidt (1962:157-158), in a survey of 1,666 stu-
dents in San Diego, found counselors to be of limited assistance to
students in college planning. Trent (1965-66:7-11) noted that many high
school counselors and college administrators have themselves insufficient
knowledge about the nature of the institutions their students enter.
Morrison (1968:265-270), in a study comparing the perceptions of coun-
selors and high school seniors concerning the reason for college choice,
produced some findings which discounted the importance of the counselor's

advice.

On the other hand, Kerr (1962:337-342), in a study of 1,350 high school seniors in Iowa, reported that the counselor, though not seen as an important influence in the college decision, nevertheless was perceived as an important source of information about colleges. Bentley and Salter (1967:178-183), in a study of the freshman class of a small liberal arts college, found that the counselor was a significant figure in the college-decision process while Graff and Peters (1969: 271-276) reported that students entering junior college would continue to need and receive help from their high school counselor in the college decision process. Gutch and Milner (1969:543-545), in a study of 1,000 college students, reported a majority as having received good advice from counselors about college choice. Fredrickson and Fonda (1972:383-389) surveyed recent admissions assistance research and compared their study of 2,500 University of Massachusetts freshmen with that of Kerr. They reported that students perceived their high school counselor as being the one person who was most helpful in terms of providing specific information on admission at a particular college.

While the issue as to the importance of the high school or college counselor in influencing the college decision remains unresolved, it seems safe to assume that the very presence or accessibility of the counselor in a high school or college contributes something to the information process as far as the prospective college student is concerned. Colleges might attend to providing counselors with accurate and detailed information.

The Role of Media

Not much research appears to have been conducted to attempt to

measure the effectiveness of media in influencing college choice. Birnbaum (1968:786-789), in a study of the effectiveness of a filmstrip as compared with that of a filmstrip-and-counseling program for junior high school juniors, indicated that the combination of the filmstrip and the counseling significantly increased the number of students considering community college attendance compared with the control group, but that the filmstrip alone had no effect. He concludes that the results indicate the importance of counseling compared with the sole use of mass media in efforts to influence post-high school plans.

Krejcie (1968), in a study of the practices and media used by public junior colleges in encouraging student enrolment in industrial-technical or engineering technician programs, as well as those prac-tices which students believed to have been most influential in their decision to enrol in college, found that (1) college catalogs, (2) book-lets, (3) leaflets, or (4) fliers that described the programs and the opportunities and careers available to graduates were the four most used as well as the most influential written media.

On the other hand, a panel discussion reported in College Board Review (Winter, 1966-67:22-24) contained answers of six college stu-dents concerning the kinds of information available to prospective col-lege students and the services schools and colleges provided to help them plan. In reply to the question as to how helpful college catalogs are and how much students use them, they recorded negative responses citing a lack of candor on the part of the colleges in their catalogs. Both Pope (1970:125) and Thresher (1966:64) warned prospective college students against over-reliance on the college catalog.

It seems appropriate, then, that colleges be aware of the

strengths and shortcomings of their attempts to provide information to students through the use of media.

Late Decisions

Kerr (1971:341) reported that 41 percent of students decide which college to attend during the last semester of their senior year and advocates greater counselor help to reduce this figure. Thomas (1969:6-7) showed that the typical student who enrols in a community college does so as the result of a late decision. Falkenberg (1970) found that one reason stated by transfer students in Alberta for deciding to attend junior college instead of university was the fact that they were refused entry to university because of the lateness of their applications. Jackson (1970:69-70) investigated the characteristics of early and late college applicants. It was found that, in general, students who apply late may enter with lower high school achievement and participation patterns in extracurricular activities than those who apply early, and they may be more likely to achieve at a lower level in college and tend to withdraw from college at a higher rate than those who apply early.

Bearing in mind the complexities which underlie any college choice, it appears that some potential community college students select the community college at a late date and as a "second choice." This may affect the amount of influence which information sources can exert over them or affect the amount of information which they in fact get. This study looked at lateness as a factor.

Student Ignorance

A report in the Junior College Journal (1970) found that many

students transferring to colleges were unaware of their goals or of what their selected program entailed. Many students did not use the staff for admissions counseling. McGeever and Burton (1966) highlighted the need for better information. Few junior college freshmen, they claimed, are aware of the gap between the last year of high school and the first year of junior college upon arriving for the fall orientation program. Trent (1965-66:7-11), in a five-year longitudinal study of 10,000 young adults from 37 high schools from California to Pennsylvania, found that entering college students were very seldom acquainted with the characteristics of the institution, faculty members, programs or students (other than high school friends). Seymour (1968:79-84), Standing and Parker (1964:2-6) and Berdie (1967:768-775) reported the tendency for pre-college perceptions to consist of overly high expectations. Thresher (1966:46), in reference to the difficulties facing the incoming college student, claimed: "He senses simply a confused world of education that he does not understand, in which he is usually forced to exercise choices and make decisions for which he is ill-equipped." Pizzo and McFall (1970:7-9), in investigating change of plans of high school seniors, cited unrealistic choices and subsequent discovery of the college not having the program they desired as possible reasons for change of plans. Knoell and Medsker (1965), in a study of junior college students who transferred to four-year colleges and universities, found that almost one-fourth of them said that uncertainty about their plans for a major or career field was initially of major importance in their decision to attend a junior college.

It would appear, then, that institutions could do more to combat what appears to be ignorance on the part of some students about the

nature of the institution, the community college, to which they have applied.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, four aspects of information have been examined: (1) literature dealing with information as a part of communication theory, (2) literature dealing with the responsibilities of institutions in providing potential college students with information, (3) literature dealing with the procedures employed by institutions in providing college students with information, and (4) literature dealing with influences and lack of influence on college students.

The nature of information, what colleges should do in dispensing it, the procedures which they employ or may employ to accomplish its dissemination, and the extent of influence over students, have been discussed.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

INSTRUMENTATION

No existing questionnaire was found which would have suited the
study, so an instrument was designed specifically for it. A sample
questionnaire appears in Appendix "A".

Sources of Questionnaire Items

Informal interviews with first-year students in one of the col-
leges under study provided useful sources of preliminary material for
inclusion in the instrument. The calendars of the two colleges in
question and those of many other colleges were examined to discover
ways in which colleges communicate with students and to ascertain what
information is provided for, and used by, incoming students.

Format

It was decided that the questionnaire be substantially open-
ended so that as much information as possible might be gathered.
Commonly used information sources were listed for respondents' considera-
tion and provision was made for a listing of other possible sources.

In an attempt to gain additional information, Part III of the
questionnaire was constructed in such a way as to present items of
information not usually considered to be available to students from

official sources. Respondents were afforded an opportunity to express their opinions. A summary of this extra information is contained in Appendix "B".

The final part of the questionnaire dealt with the accuracy of students' information and their information sources. Respondents were not required to identify themselves.

Revision of Questionnaire Items

The first draft of the questionnaire was submitted to a graduate seminar at the University of Alberta and certain changes were suggested.

Subsequently, a second draft was tested on a group of first-year undergraduates in Educational Administration. Since access to first-year community college students was difficult, it was considered that these students, being of comparable ages and having just left high school would, within limits, be fairly representative of a cross-section of the college population under study.

At the same time, further unstructured interviews were held with some students at one of the institutions in the study with a view to obtaining additional insight into the suitability of questionnaire content.

As a result, some items were omitted, the questionnaire substantially shortened, and a final draft prepared.

DATA COLLECTION

Selection of the Sample

Because of the need to recall information sources used prior to entry into college, it was decided that first-year students only be

allowed to participate. It was assumed that first-year students would have more accurate recall than other students. Two colleges in comparable localities, with large first-year enrolments in both transfer and career programs, were selected. The registrars of both colleges were asked to identify all full-time first-year students from their college records. There were 836 students identified.

Procedures

Both colleges were contacted informally in November 1970, and tacit approval secured for the study. The colleges were formally contacted, by letter, in January 1971 and the field study was begun in March.

Originally it was proposed that both institutions would use class time for the completion of the questionnaires. When this was ultimately ruled out at one of the colleges on the day proposed for distribution, an alternative procedure of collecting data was adopted. Staff were asked to cooperate in distributing questionnaires to students who were to complete them on their own time and return them to a central collection point. A memorandum to this effect was secured from the president and circulated to staff, with the questionnaires.

The questionnaires were collected one week after their distribution at this college and, in view of the small return, appeals through the students' union were made to increase the ratio of returns. Only few additional questionnaires were collected when data collection was closed two weeks later.

At the other college the questionnaires were distributed in classes. Some were completed immediately while the rest were to be returned by students within two days. Collection boxes were also set up in this

institution and returns were discontinued three weeks after the initial distribution.

Follow-up Procedures

Following distribution of the questionnaires, a random sample of first-year students, in each college, was interviewed in an attempt to check the adequacy of the questionnaire and its reliability.

TREATMENT OF DATA

Processing of Questionnaires

No comparison was intended between institutions in the study, so the data were treated as one unit. To facilitate computer analysis, responses to questions 7, 8 and 13 were collapsed into those categories appearing in the tables. A check of the questionnaires revealed that over 90 percent of the respondents named only one or sometimes two sources of information when more than one was requested, so a decision was made to accept the first named source only, in response to questions 7, 8 and 13. The data obtained in response to these questions were subject, therefore, to these limitations. Responses to all other questions were examined and coded.

In view of the small number of respondents in the "other" category, the 21 respondents so classified were eliminated from the analysis on program variable. It was considered that with such a small group, no meaningful comparisons could be made with the career and transfer groups.

Information provided by the college registrars led to the classification of schools as either "Visited" or "Not Visited," according to whether or not they had had previous known contact with the college in

question.

Depending on when respondents reported having decided to attend college, they were classified as either "Early Applicants" (before August 31st, 1970), or "Late Applicants" (after August 31st, 1970). The rationale for selecting this date was that by August 31, 1970, respondents would have received grade 12 examination results, and would have had time to explore and decide upon a college of their choice.

Processing of Data

The data were transferred to computer cards and subjected to a computer program which gave percentages and frequencies for the four main dependent variables against the independent variables selected. Analysis was largely limited to a descriptive treatment of the data. Chi-square procedures were used to examine observed distributions against theoretical distributions whenever appropriate.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Results from the data analysis must be viewed with caution because of the relatively small percentage returns on which they are based. Comparisons between students in different programs and between sub-groups must be interpreted in the light of the limitations of this study.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the construction of the research questionnaire, including its revision. The selection of the sample and data collection procedures were described and details of returns furnished. Finally, the treatment and processing of the data and a caution as to their interpretation were presented.

Chapter 4

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

The data are presented in descriptive form in answer to the three main research questions:

1.   What sources of information did students use in finding out about their college?

2.   What kinds of information did students find about their college?

3.   How did students rate the accuracy of the information they discovered about their college?

Each question was treated in terms of the following variables:

1.   Program in which enroled,

2.   Sex,

3.   Visitation, and

4.   Time of application.

RETURNS

The overall return was 39 percent, college A yielding twenty-eight percent and college B, fifty percent. Table 1 shows the distribution of questionnaire returns by college, and Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by program, sex, visitation, and time of application. Eighteen questionnaires had to be rejected because of incomplete answers.

Table 1

Distribution of Questionnaire Returns by College

	College A		College B	
	f	%	f	%
Usable questionnaires	171	28	113	50
Unusable questionnaires	8	1	10	4
No reply	431	71	103	46
Total	610	100	226	100

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents by Program, Sex,
Visitation, and Time of Application

			Students	
			f	%
Transfer	Program		151	51
Career			112	42
Other			21	7
Male	Sex		123	43
Female			161	57
Visited	Visitation		170	60
Not Visited			114	40
Early Applicants	Date of Application		185	65
Late Applicants			99	35

Absenteeism, refusal to participate in the study, the length of the questionnaire and college arrangements for the completion of the questionnaire, all appear to have been factors inhibiting a higher return of questionnaires. Some of the difficulties experienced by the colleges in facilitating data collection were due, in part, to the time of year when the data were collected together with the fact that these colleges constituted the populations for a large number of research studies in 1970.

As can be seen in Table 2, 51 percent of students were in the transfer program, and 57 percent were female. A slightly higher percentage, 60 percent, had been visited prior to enrolment, and 35 percent of students were classified as early applicants.

SOURCES OF FIRST INFORMATION
ABOUT COLLEGE

In coding the answers, the sources of first information were collapsed into the categories shown in Table 3 owing to the low frequency of response in some categories and to facilitate statistical treatment of the data.

The category Students included Former college students, Student(s) at present in attendance, and Friends, items A, H, and P in the questionnaire (Appendix A). Items B and G, Parents and Member(s) of your family, were collapsed to form the category, Parents and Family. Items C, D, L and M in the original questionnaire, T.V., Radio, Newspaper article, and College guest weekend were subsumed under Mass Media. The item College Calendar was preserved as a separate category because of high student response to this item. Items E and F, High school teachers and High school counselors, became High School Personnel.

Table 3

Distribution of Sources of First Information by Program

Sources of First Information	Transfer (N=151)	Career (N=112)	Total (N=263)	
	%	%	f	%
Students	37	31	91	35
Parents and Family	11	13	31	12
Mass Media	3	8	14	5
High School Personnel	16	9	34	13
College Personnel	19	13	43	16
College Calendar	10	10	26	10
Manpower	3	17	24	9

Chi-square   20.73, significant at .01 level.

College counselors, College faculty, College team, College president
and College registrar, items I, J, K, N and O were subsumed under Col-
lege Personnel.

Respondents were permitted to write in responses in addition
or as alternatives to those listed in the questionnaire. This resulted
in the generation of the category Manpower. While students were asked
to name the three most important sources of first information, most
students named only one source and, therefore, the first named source
in every case was used.

As has been mentioned on page 28, twenty-one respondents in the
"other" category were eliminated from the program variable. Because
there were so few respondents in this category, no useful comparisons
could be drawn with the transfer and career students. Accordingly,
the total number of students on the program variable was two hundred
and sixty-three.

As shown in Table 3, the most popular source of first infor-
mation, Students, was chosen by 35 percent of all respondents. College
Personnel was mentioned by 16 percent of students and 13 percent indi-
cated that High School Personnel was their most important source of
first information about the college. Smaller percentages chose Parents
and Family (12 percent), College Calendar (10 percent), Manpower (9
percent) and Mass Media (5 percent).

Responses Classified by Program

While Students was the most important source of first informa-
tion for respondents in both programs, thirty-seven percent of transfer
students as compared to 31 percent of career students chose this source.

The second largest percentage response from transfer students (19 percent) was for College Personnel. Seventeen percent of career students chose Manpower as their most important source of information about the college. Manpower was mentioned by only 3 percent of transfer students. High School Personnel which was chosen by 16 percent of transfer students was mentioned by 9 percent of career students.

There was little difference in the percentage of transfer and career students who chose Parents and Family. College Calendar was regarded as an important source of first information by 10 percent of students in both programs. Mass Media, mentioned by 5 percent of all students, was a more popular source of first information for career students (8 percent) but was mentioned by only 3 percent of transfer students as their source of first information about the college.

Overall, as the chi-square shows, there were statistically significant differences between the responses of transfer and career students with respect to sources of first information.

Responses Classified by Sex

When responses were classified according to the sex of the respondents, (Table 4), differences between the responses of males and females were noted. The chi-square, significant at the .05 level, indicated that these differences were statistically significant.

For both sexes, Students was the most important source of first information, with equal percentages of male and female students (34 percent) selecting this response. The second largest group of male responses (21 percent) chose College Personnel as their source of first information. This source was chosen by 13 percent of the female respondents.

Table 4

Distribution of Sources of First Information by Sex

Sources of First Information	Male (N=123)	Female (N=161)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Students	34	34	97	34
Parents and Family	9	13	32	11
Mass Media	5	5	14	5
High School Personnel	9	15	35	12
College Personnel	21	13	47	17
College Calendar	7	13	29	10
Manpower	15	7	30	11

Chi-square   13.63, significant at .05 level.

A higher percentage of females than males selected High School Personnel, Parents and Family, and College Calendar, while a higher percentage of males chose Manpower as their most important source of first information about the college. Equal percentages of male and female students chose Mass Media, the source with the lowest overall percentage of responses.

Responses Classified by Visitation

The distribution of responses classified by visitation is shown in Table 5. The chi-square, significant at the .01 level, indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the responses of the visited and not visited groups.

Respondents in both groups chose Students as their major source of first information about the college. Nineteen percent of those students in schools visited by the college chose College Personnel as their first source of information. Of those students not visited, 12 percent indicated that it was their most important source, while 18 percent indicated that Manpower was their most important source of information. Only 6 percent of students in the visited group chose Manpower.

Equal percentages of visited and non-visited students chose Parents and Family and there was little difference between the percentages of visited and not visited students who chose College Calendar. Nine percent of those visited and 11 percent of those not visited chose College Calendar as their most important source of first information. A higher percentage of those visited (16 percent) than those not visited (7 percent) chose High School Personnel as the most important source. Mass Media was mentioned by 8 percent of not visited and 3 percent of visited students.

Table 5

Distribution of Sources of First Information
by Visitation

Sources of First Information	Visited (N=170)	Not Visited (N=114)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Students	35	33	97	34
Parents and Family	11	11	32	11
Mass Media	3	8	14	5
High School Personnel	16	7	35	12
College Personnel	19	12	47	17
College Calendar	9	11	29	10
Manpower	6	18	30	11

Chi-square   19.06, significant at .01 level.

Students who were visited relied more on High School Personnel and College Personnel than did those not visited. In contrast, of those whose first source of information was Manpower, more were in the not visited category.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

Table 6 shows the distribution of responses by time of application of the respondents. The chi-square was significant at the .01 level.

Thirty-nine percent of late applicants, students who applied to enter college after August 31, 1970, and 31 percent of early applicants, those who had applied before August 31, chose Students as their most important source of first information. Eighteen percent of early applicants indicated that College Personnel was their main source of first information. A similar percentage of late applicants (18 percent) and 7 percent of early applicants chose the source, Manpower.

Approximately 11 percent of both groups thought that Parents and Family was their most important source of first information about the college. The sources, High School Personnel and College Calendar were chosen by higher percentages of early applicants while there was little difference in the percentage of students in both groups indicating that Mass Media was their most important source of first information.

Differences seem to suggest that late applicants strongly relied on Students and Manpower as important sources of first information while early applicants made more use of High School Personnel and the College Calendar. Sixty-nine percent of late applicants, as compared to 49 percent of early applicants, obtained their first information about the college from sources outside direct college influence.

Table 6

Distribution of Sources of First Information
by Time of Application

Sources of First Information	Early Applicants (N=185)	Late Applicants (N=99)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Students	31	39	97	34
Parents and Family	11	12	32	11
Mass Media	5	4	14	5
High School Personnel	15	8	35	12
College Personnel	18	13	47	17
College Calendar	13	5	29	10
Manpower	7	18	30	11

Chi-square   17.17, significant at .01 level.

SOURCES ACTUALLY USED IN DECIDING
TO ATTEND

In question 8, students were asked what sources of information did they actually use in deciding to attend the college. They were asked to name the three most informative sources used, in question 9. Although students were asked to name the three most informative sources actually used in deciding to attend college, over 95 percent of students restricted themselves to one choice. A check of responses revealed that fewer than five percent of respondents named more than one source in answer to question 8. Accordingly, one response, the first mentioned in question 9, was used in data analysis.

Owing to the low frequency of response in some categories, the data were collapsed into seven categories. The item Students embraced items F, O and T, Present student(s) of the college, Advice of Friends, and Former student(s) of the college. Items E, P, and Q, Parent(s), Brother or Sister, and Other relatives became Parents and Family.

Mass Media included the items H, I, J, K, M, R and U, Newspapers, Radio, T.V., College Information Bulletins, Public Advertising, College Guest Weekend and Student Newspaper. Items A, C and D, High school counselor, High school teacher and Other teacher(s) were subsumed under High School Personnel.

College Personnel was extended to include both personal and impersonal college contacts and consisted of items G, S and L, Information provided by Registrar, Letters from the college, and College Visitation team. College Calendar was retained as a separate item and Manpower was written in under item V as a source used by many students. There were no responses to item N, Own resources.

As shown in Table 7, 56 percent of all respondents chose the College Calendar as the source of information actually used in deciding to attend college. College Personnel was identified by 15 percent of students and 10 percent of respondents selected Students. Manpower was chosen by 9 percent of the respondents while smaller percentages mentioned High School Personnel (5 percent), Parents and Family (4 percent), and Mass Media (2 percent).

Responses Classified by Program

Table 7 shows the percentage distribution of returns when classified by the program of the respondents. The chi-square was significant at the .01 level.

Both transfer and career students chose College Calendar as the source of information they actually used in deciding to attend college. Sixty-six percent of transfer students chose this source as against 43 percent of career students. The information provided by College Personnel was used by 17 percent of transfer and 13 percent of career students in deciding to attend college. Manpower was regarded as an important source of information used by 19 percent of career students. This source was mentioned by only one percent of transfer students.

There was little difference in the percentages of transfer and career students who chose High School Personnel, Students, and Parents and Family as the source of information actually used in deciding to attend college.

The importance of the Calendar as a source of information actually used by both groups in deciding to attend and the importance of Manpower for career students was noteworthy.

Table 7

Distribution of Sources of Information Actually Used
in Deciding to Attend by Program

Sources	Transfer (N=151)	Career (N=112)	Total (N=263)	
	%	%	f	%
Mass Media	0	4	4	2
High School Personnel	3	7	12	5
Students	10	10	26	10
College Personnel	17	13	40	15
College Calendar	66	43	148	56
Manpower	1	19	23	9
Parents and Family	3	5	10	4

Chi-square   37.46, significant at .01 level.

Responses Classified by Sex

Although males depended more strongly than females on all sources of information except High School Personnel (Table 8), the differences noted were not statistically significant as shown by the chi-square.

Responses Classified by Visitation

The distribution of responses by visitation is shown in Table 9. As indicated by the chi-square, there were statistically significant differences between the responses of the groups.

Both groups selected College Calendar as their most important source of information actually used in deciding to attend college. Thirteen percent of those students in schools visited by the college and 18 percent of students in the not visited group chose College Personnel as the source of information actually used in deciding to attend college. Only 5 percent of those students visited identified Manpower as a source used, while 17 percent of those not visited indicated that they had used this source.

Comparable percentages of respondents in both groups chose High School Personnel and Students. Seven percent of those students not visited and 2 percent of those in the visited category chose Parents and Family. Mass Media was chosen by no one in the visited group but by 4 percent of those not visited as the source of information actually used in deciding to attend college.

Those students who were not visited by college representatives placed a greater reliance on indirect communication, as opposed to the more personal information sources of those in the visited group who were in direct contact with the institution.

Table 8

Distribution of Sources of Information Actually Used
in Deciding to Attend by Sex

Sources	Male (N=123)	Female (N=161)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Mass Media	2	1	4	1
High School Personnel	2	6	13	5
Students	12	9	29	10
College Personnel	17	13	42	15
College Calendar	49	60	157	55
Manpower	5	4	27	10
Parents and Family	12	8	12	4

Chi-square   8.93, not significant.

Table 9

Distribution of Sources of Information Actually Used
in Deciding to Attend by Visitation

Sources	Visited (N=170)	Not Visited (N=114)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Mass Media	0	4	4	1
High School Personnel	5	4	13	5
Students	11	10	29	10
College Personnel	13	18	42	15
College Calendar	64	42	157	55
Manpower	5	17	27	10
Parents and Family	2	7	12	4

Chi-square   27.24, significant at .01 level.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

Table 10 shows the distribution of responses by time of application of the respondents. The chi-square, significant at the .01 level, indicated that there were significant differences in the responses of the groups.

Sixty-four percent of early applicants and 38 percent of late applicants chose the College Calendar as a source of information actually used in deciding to attend college. While 4 percent of early applicants chose Manpower, 18 percent of late applicants selected this response. A higher percentage of late applicants (15 percent) than early applicants (8 percent) indicated that Students was the source of information actually used in deciding to attend college.

Though there was little difference in the percentages of early and late applicants who used High School Personnel or Parents and Family as the source of information actually used, results in general confirm the interview data obtained at one college which suggested that those students who changed their choice of post-secondary institution at a late date might rely more heavily on particular sources of information than those who had decided to attend at an early date and had access to a wider variety of information sources.

SOURCES OF THE MAIN KINDS OF
INFORMATION DISCOVERED

While many students were likely to have seen college publications, available research findings have suggested that other sources of information might have been of equal value to prospective college students. Accordingly, respondents were asked to comment on whether or not the main kinds of information which they discovered about their college

Table 10

Distribution of Sources of Information Actually Used
in Deciding to Attend by Time of Application

Sources	Early Applicants (N=185)	Late Applicants (N=99)	Total (N=284)	
	%	%	f	%
Mass Media	2	1	4	1
High School Personnel	5	4	13	5
Students	8	15	29	10
College Personnel	14	17	42	15
College Calendar	64	38	157	55
Manpower	4	19	27	10
Parents and Family	4	5	12	4

Chi-square   27.57, significant at .01 level.

came from the College Calendar or from other sources.

Overall, College Calendar was chosen by more than 60 percent of the respondents as the source of the main kinds of information discovered prior to enrolment.

Responses Classified by Program

The chi-square indicated that there were no significant differences between the responses of transfer and career students concerning the source of the main kinds of information discovered about the college (Table 11). The majority of students in both groups chose College Calendar as being the source of the main kinds of information discovered about the college prior to enrolment.

Responses Classified by Sex

The differences between male and female responses were found to be statistically significant at the .01 level. As shown in Table 12, seventy-three percent of female students selected the College Calendar as opposed to 50 percent of males who were evenly divided in their responses between College Calendar and Other Sources.

Responses Classified by Visitation

The chi-square was not significant when responses were classified by visitation (Table 13). The majority of students in both groups found the main kinds of information about their college in the College Calendar.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

There were statistically significant differences between the groups when responses were classified by time of application as in Table

Table 11

Distribution of Respondents Choosing College Calendar or Other Sources
for the Main Kinds of Information Discovered by Program

Sources	Transfer (N=151)		Career (N=112)		Total (N=263)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
College Calendar	100	66	67	60	167	60
Other Sources	51	34	45	40	96	40

Chi-square 2.31, not significant.

Table 12

Distribution of Respondents Choosing College Calendar or Other Sources
for the Main Kinds of Information Discovered by Sex

Sources	Male (N=123)		Female (N=161)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
College Calendar	62	50	117	73	179	63
Other Sources	61	50	44	27	105	37

Chi-square 14.89, significant at .01 level.

Table 13

Distribution of Respondents Choosing College Calendar
or Other Sources by Visitation

Sources	Visited (N=170)		Not Visited (N=114)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
College Calendar	113	67	66	58	179	63
Other Sources	57	34	48	42	105	37

Chi-square   2.17, not significant.

Table 14

Distribution of Respondents Choosing College Calendar
or Other Sources by Time of Application

Sources	Early Applicants (N=185		Late Applicants (N=99)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
College Calendar	134	72	45	45	179	63
Other Sources	51	28	54	55	105	37

Chi-square   22.26, significant at .01 level.

14. The chi-square was significant at the .01 level. While 72 percent
of early applicants used the College Calendar to discover the main
kinds of information about their college prior to enrolment, the Calen-
dar was used by a much smaller percentage (46 percent) of late appli-
cants. Fifty-five percent of these students relied on Other Sources
for their information.

AWARENESS OF SPECIFIC KINDS OF INFORMATION

Some items of information were taken from college calendars
and from other sources and presented for the students' consideration.
The intention was to discover what kinds of information students had
about their college before enroling. Students were asked to indicate
on a "Yes"/"No" scale their awareness of each item before they entered
college.

Over 60 percent of students were aware of Fees, Admission
Requirements, Course Requirements, Programs of Study and Counseling
Services and unaware of How the College is Administered and College
Regulations Re Examinations and Marks. Approximately half the students
were aware of the Academic Schedule, Accommodation, Attendance Policies
and the Financial Awards Available.

Responses Classified by Program

When the data were classified according to the program of the
respondents (Table 15), the chi-square indicated that there were statis-
tically significant differences between transfer and career students as
to their awareness of certain kinds of information. These items of
information were: Fees, Admission Requirements, Programs of Study and

Table 15

Distribution of Responses as to Awareness of Specific Kinds
of Information Prior to Enrolment by Program

Kinds of Information	Transfer (N=151)		Career (N=112)		Total (N=263)		Chi-square
	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	
Academic Schedule	57	43	45	55	52	49	3.71*
Fees	89	11	76	24	83	17	7.49**
Admission Requirements	92	8	80	20	87	13	7.70**
Specific Course Requirements	83	17	77	23	81	20	1.75
How College is Administered	16	84	16	84	16	84	0.00
Regulations Re Exams and Marks	43	57	35	65	40	60	1.63
Accommodation	59	41	52	48	56	44	1.21
Programs of Study	78	22	61	39	71	29	8.66**
Counseling Services	71	29	64	36	68	32	1.31
Attendance Policies	40	60	55	45	47	53	6.08**
Financial Awards Available	47	53	35	66	42	59	3.84*

**Chi-square significant at .01 level.
*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

Attendance Policies where the chi-square was significant at the .01 level, and Academic Schedule and Financial Awards Available, where the chi-square was significant at the .05 level.

Fees. Eighty-nine percent of transfer students indicated that they were aware of course costs and other college Fees. A smaller percentage (76 percent) of career students were aware of Fees, and 24 percent of career students stated that they were unaware of this item.

Admission requirements. Almost all transfer students (92 percent) had this information but 20 percent of career students stated that they were unaware of the Admission Requirements of their college prior to enrolment.

Programs of study. A smaller percentage of career students (61 percent) than of transfer students (78 percent) were aware of this information. Thirty-nine percent of career students and 22 percent of transfer students did not know about the Programs of Study offered by their colleges before registering at the college.

Attendance policies. While the majority of transfer students (60 percent) were unaware of this item, 55 percent of career students indicated that they were aware of the Attendance Policies of their college.

Academic schedule. Fifty-seven percent of transfer students were aware of the academic schedule of their college but 55 percent of career students said that they did not have this information.

Financial awards available. Although over half of the students

in both groups were unaware of this information, a higher percentage of Unaware responses was recorded for career students. Sixty-six percent of these students did not know about the financial awards available at their college.

Responses Classified by Sex

When the data were classified according to the sex of the respondents, the differences in responses between the two groups were statistically significant in only two cases (Table 16).

The chi-square for the distribution of responses to the item Fees was significant at the .01 level and for the item Admission Requirements at the .05 level.

Fees. While the majority of students in both groups were aware of the college fees, a higher percentage of male students (24 percent) than of female students (13 percent) indicated that they did not have this information before entering college.

Admission requirements. A higher percentage of female students (91 percent) were aware of their college admission requirements. Nineteen percent of male students indicated that they were unaware of this information.

Responses Classified by Visitation

The responses of students who had been visited by college representatives differed significantly from those of students who had not been visited on certain items (Table 17). The chi-square was significant at the .01 level for the responses on the items Fees, Admission Requirements, Specific Course Requirements and Programs of Study and at

Table 16

Distribution of Responses as to Awareness of Specific Kinds
of Information Prior to Enrolment by Sex

Kinds of Information	Male (N=123)		Female (N=161)		Total (N=284)		Chi-square
	Aware	Unaware	Aware	Unaware	Aware	Unaware	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Academic Schedule	50	50	53	48	51	49	0.17
Fees	76	24	87	13	82	18	5.97**
Admission Requirements	81	19	91	9	87	13	5.20*
Specific Course Requirements	76	24	84	16	81	19	2.97
How College is Administered	15	85	16	84	16	85	0.14
Regulations Re Exams and Marks	33	67	44	56	40	61	3.48
Accommodation	56	44	54	47	54	46	0.15
Programs of Study	64	36	74	26	70	30	3.28
Counseling Services	63	37	70	30	67	33	1.49
Attendance Policies	42	58	48	52	46	54	0.96
Financial Awards Available	38	62	43	57	41	59	0.93

**Chi-square significant at .01 level.
*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

Table 17

Distribution of Responses as to Awareness of Specific Kinds
of Information Prior to Enrolment by Visitation

Kinds of Information	Visited (N=170)		Not Visited (N=114)		Total (N=284)		Chi-square
	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	
Academic Schedule	54	46	47	53	51	49	1.25
Fees	89	11	72	28	82	18	13.50**
Admission Requirements	92	8	79	21	87	13	9.87**
Specific Course Requirements	89	11	69	31	81	19	17.57**
How College is Administered	14	86	18	82	16	85	0.66
Regulations Re Exams and Marks	45	55	32	68	40	61	4.62*
Accommodation	57	43	51	50	54	46	1.18
Programs of Study	78	22	57	43	70	30	14.27**
Counseling Services	72	28	60	40	67	33	4.00*
Attendance Policies	42	58	50	50	46	54	1.79
Financial Awards Available	44	56	36	64	41	59	1.69

**Chi-square significant at .01 level.
*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

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the .05 level for responses to items Regulations Re Exams and Marks and Counseling Services.

Fees. Eighty-nine percent of students who had been visited by college representatives were aware of the college fees. Twenty-eight percent of those students who had not been visited were unaware of this information before enrolment.

Admission requirements. A higher percentage of visited (92 percent) than not visited (79 percent) students were aware of this information. One fifth of those students in the not visited category were unaware of Admission Requirements prior to enrolment.

Specific course requirements. Thirty-one percent of not visited students were unaware of Specific Course Requirements before enrolment. A higher percentage of visited students (89 percent) were aware of this information.

Programs of study. Forty-three percent of students who had not been visited by college representatives were unaware of the programs of study offered by their college as were 22 percent of visited students.

Regulations re exams and marks. A large percentage (68 percent) of not visited students were unaware of this information while approximately half of students who had been visited knew the regulations.

Counseling services. Seventy-two percent of visited and 60 percent of not visited students were aware of their college counseling services. Forty percent of students who had not been visited did not have this information.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

When responses were classified according to time of application (Table 18), there were statistically significant differences between responses to the following items, Academic Schedule, Fees, Admission Requirements, Specific Course Requirements, Regulations Re Exams and Marks, Programs of Study and Financial Awards Available where the chi-square was significant at the .01 level, and Accommodation, where the chi-square was significant at the .05 level.

Academic schedule. While 57 percent of early applicants stated that they were aware of this item, 59 percent of late applicants indicated that they did not know the Academic Schedule of their college prior to enrolment.

Fees. Eighty-nine percent of early applicants and seventy percent of late applicants were aware of college Fees. A higher percentage of late applicants (30 percent) were unaware of this item.

Admission requirements. While 92 percent of early applicants were aware of their college Admission Requirements, 24 percent of late applicants did not know this information.

Specific course requirements. Thirty-two percent of late applicants and 13 percent of early applicants were unaware of Specific Course Requirements.

Regulations re exams and marks. Over half (54 percent) of early applicants and 74 percent of late applicants did not know their college Regulations Re Exams and Marks. Forty-six percent of early applicants were aware of this information.

Table 18

Distribution of Responses as to Awareness of Specific Kinds
of Information Prior to Enrolment by Time of Application

	Early Applicants (N=185)		Late Applicants (N=99)		Total (N=284)		Chi-square
	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	Aware %	Unaware %	
Academic Schedule	57	43	41	59	51	49	6.76**
Fees	89	11	70	30	82	18	15.56**
Admission Requirements	92	7	76	24	87	13	15.32**
Specific Course Requirements	88	13	68	32	81	19	15.12**
How College is Administered	17	83	13	87	16	85	0.68
Regulations Re Exams and Marks	46	54	27	74	40	61	10.59**
Accommodation	59	41	46	54	54	46	4.42*
Programs of Study	76	25	59	41	70	30	8.13**
Counseling Services	69	31	64	36	67	33	0.79
Attendance Policies	46	54	44	56	46	54	0.08
Financial Awards Available	47	53	30	70	41	59	7.13**

**Chi-square significant at .01 level.
*Chi-square significant at .05 level.

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Programs of study. A higher percentage of late applicants
were unaware of this item. Forty-one percent of students in this group
indicated that they were unaware of their college's Programs of Study.
Seventy-six percent of early applicants had this information.

Financial awards available. Seventy percent of late applicants
were unaware of this item while 47 percent of early applicants knew
the Financial Awards Available. Fifty-three percent of early applicants
were not aware of this information.

Accommodation. As might be expected, a higher percentage of
early applicants knew about the Accommodation available. Fifty-nine
percent of early applicants as opposed to 46 percent of late applicants
were aware of the Accommodation available. Fifty-four percent of late
applicants did not have this information.

MOST ACCURATE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Respondents were asked to list the sources that had been the
most accurate for them prior to college enrolment. Only six students
gave more than one source in reply to this question and, therefore, only
the first response was taken in all cases. Responses are discussed
according to the four dependent variables.

The response, All Other Sources, included small percentages of
responses in favor of Parents and Family, High School Personnel, Col-
lege Communications and College Guest Weekend. One student mentioned
Mass Media.

Overall, College Calendar was chosen as the most accurate source
of information by 35 percent of all respondents. Twenty-five percent

selected College Personnel and 19 percent selected Students as the most accurate source of information. Manpower was selected by 9 percent of respondents.

Responses Classified by Program

Table 19 gives the responses by program. The chi-square, significant at the .01 level, indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the responses of transfer and career students for their most accurate source of information.

College Calendar was mentioned by 38 percent of transfer students and 31 percent of career students as their most accurate source of information. Twenty-five percent of transfer students chose Students as opposed to 11 percent of career students. College Personnel was identified as their most accurate source by 30 percent of the respondents in the career group and by 22 percent in the transfer group. Only two percent of transfer students selected Manpower while 17 percent of the career students chose Manpower as their most accurate source of information.

Responses Classified by Sex

The chi-square, significant at the .01 level, (Table 20), substantiated that there were statistically significant differences between sexes on their responses for the most accurate sources of information used.

Of females, 45 percent chose the College Calendar as their most important source of information. The Calendar was selected by a much smaller percentage of male students, 21 percent, as their most accurate source. Thirty-one percent of male respondents and 20 percent of female

Table 19

Distribution of Responses for the Most Accurate
Sources of Information by Program

Most Accurate Sources	Transfer (N=149)	Career (N=108)	Total (N=257)
	%	%	%
College Calendar	38	31	35
College Personnel	22	30	25
Students	25	11	19
Manpower	2	17	9
All Other Sources	13	11	12

Chi-square   27.93, significant at .01 level.

Table 20

Distribution of Responses for the Most Accurate
Sources of Information by Sex

Most Accurate Sources	Male (N=118)	Female (N=157)	Total (N=275)
	%	%	%
College Calendar	21	45	35
College Personnel	31	20	25
Students	24	16	19
Manpower	14	6	9
All Other Sources	10	12	12

Chi-square   21.56, significant at .01 level.

respondents selected College Personnel as their most accurate source.
The source, Students, was chosen by 24 percent of male and 16 percent
of female respondents.

Responses Classified by Visitation

When responses were classified by visitation, Table 21, the
chi-square, significant at the .01 level, showed that there were stati-
stically significant differences between the responses of visited and
not visited students.

College Calendar was listed as the most accurate source of infor-
mation by 39 percent of visited students. Twenty-eight percent of those
not visited also mentioned the Calendar and 31 percent felt that their
most accurate source of information was College Personnel. This source
was mentioned by 21 percent of students in the visited category. Almost
equal percentages of students in both groups listed Students as their
most accurate source. Manpower was an accurate source for 13 percent
of not visited and 7 percent of visited students.

For those students visited prior to enrolment, College Calendar
was their most accurate source while almost equal percentages of students
in schools not visited by college representatives chose College Calendar
and College Personnel.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

The responses classified by time of application are shown in
Table 22. The chi-square was significant at the .01 level.

Forty-three percent of early applicants found the College Calen-
dar to be their most accurate source of information and 21 percent listed

Table 21

Distribution of Responses for the Most Accurate
Sources of Information by Visitation

Most Accurate Sources	Visited (N=168)	Not Visited (N=107)	Total (N=275)
	%	%	%
College Calendar	39	28	35
College Personnel	21	31	25
Students	20	18	19
Manpower	7	13	9
All Other Sources	13	10	12

Chi-square 19.27, significant at .01 level.

Table 22

Distribution of Responses for the Most Accurate
Sources of Information by Time of Application

Most Accurate Sources	Early Applicants (N=185)	Late Applicants (N=95)	Total (N=275)
	%	%	%
College Calendar	43	19	35
College Personnel	21	30	25
Students	17	23	19
Manpower	6	17	9
All Other Sources	12	10	12

Chi=square 22.52, significant at .01 level.

College Personnel as their most important source. A higher percentage of late applicants (30 percent) chose College Personnel and 23 percent of students in this category mentioned Students as the source they found to be most accurate.

Seventeen percent of late applicants mentioned Manpower, listed by only 6 percent of early applicants, as their most accurate source of information. Approximately the same percentages of late and early applicants found sources other than those listed to be most accurate sources of information for them.

MOST INACCURATE SOURCES
OF INFORMATION

Students were afforded an opportunity to comment on sources which they had used for information prior to attendance at the college and which they had found to be inaccurate. These sources may have been provided through either official or unofficial channels. Only 10 students availed themselves of this opportunity. The three sources identified were College Counselors (6), Manpower (3) and Friends (1).

OVERALL ACCURACY OF INFORMATION RECEIVED AND
OVERALL ACCURACY OF COLLEGE PICTURE

Differences were thought to exist between responses to a question contrasting the overall accuracy of any and whatever information students received, from whatever sources, and the responses to a question asking for a total impression of the accuracy of the picture which students had of the college before they entered. Since few potential students, it was assumed, have an accurate picture of an institution which

they have never attended, the thrust of the question was to see just how pronounced was the misperception.

Overall, there was a high level of confidence expressed by respondents with regard to accuracy of information received, with 90 percent giving positive replies. On the question of accuracy of college picture, less certainty existed, with 41 percent of respondents claiming that they had not had an accurate picture of the college before enroling.

Responses Classified by Program

As shown in Table 23, ninety-three percent of transfer students and 86 percent of career students considered that the information they had received was, on the whole, accurate. Small percentages of career students (14 percent) and transfer students (7 percent) indicated that the information was inaccurate. The chi-square was significant at the .05 level.

In terms of overall accuracy of college picture, the differences between responses of transfer and career students were not statistically significant (Table 24). Just over half of all students felt that they had an accurate picture of the college before enrolment.

Responses Classified by Sex

Responses of students classified by sex are shown in Tables 25 and 26. The chi-square was not significant in either case. Almost equal percentages of male and female students rated the overall information they had received as accurate and felt that they had an accurate picture of the college prior to enrolment. Forty-three percent of male and female students felt that their picture of the college was inaccurate,

Table 23

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of Information Received by Program

	Transfer (N=151)		Career (N=112)		Total (N=263)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	141	93	96	86	237	90
Not Accurate	10	7	16	14	26	10

Chi-square   4.24, significant at .05 level.

Table 24

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of College Picture by Program

	Transfer (N=151)		Career (N=112)		Total (N=263)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	94	62	62	55	156	59
Not Accurate	57	38	50	45	107	41

Chi-square   1.27, not significant.

Table 25

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of Information Received by Sex

	Male (N=123)		Female (N=161)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	110	89	145	90	155	90
Not Accurate	13	11	16	10	29	10

Chi-square   0.03, not significant.

Table 26

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of College Picture by Sex

	Male (N=123)		Female (N=161)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	70	57	93	58	163	57
Not Accurate	53	43	68	42	121	43

Chi-square   0.02, not significant.

although only 10 percent considered that they had received inaccurate information.

Responses Classified by Visitation

Responses classified by visitation are shown in Tables 27 and 28. While a slightly higher percentage of those visited indicated that the information they had received was accurate and considered that they had an accurate picture of the college, there were no significant differences between the responses of visited and not visited groups as shown by the chi-square.

Responses Classified by Time of Application

As shown in Tables 29 and 30, the responses of early and late applicants did not differ significantly for overall accuracy of information received or for overall accuracy of college picture.

SUMMARY

This chapter reported the sources of first information, and the sources of information which students actually used in deciding to attend college. Some kinds of information that they found out about their college and their opinions as to the accuracy of their overall information were also discussed.

The importance of Students and College Personnel as information sources for prospective college freshmen, especially late applicants, was seen and the popularity of the Calendar and less personal information sources with students outside direct college influence was evident.

Except in the case of late applicants, the College Calendar appeared to be the source which was of greatest use in supplying basic

Table 27

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of Information Received by Visitation

	Visited (N=170)		Not Visited (N=114)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	157	92	98	86	255	90
Not Accurate	13	8	16	14	29	10

Chi-square   3.04, not significant.

Table 28

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of College Picture by Visitation

	Visited (N=170)		Not Visited (N=114)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	102	60	61	54	163	57
Not Accurate	68	40	53	47	121	43

Chi-square   1.17, not significant.

Table 29

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of Information Received by Time of Application

	Early Applicants (N=185)		Late Applicants (N=99)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	165	89	90	91	255	90
Not Accurate	20	11	9	9	29	10

Chi-square   0.21, not significant.

Table 30

Distribution of Responses for Overall Accuracy
of College Picture by Time of Application

	Early Applicants (N=185)		Late Applicants (N=99)		Total (N=284)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Accurate	110	60	53	54	163	57
Not Accurate	75	41	46	47	121	43

Chi-square   0.93, not significant.

information as well as being the one most often used by students.

In general, students saw themselves as having been aware of items of information thought to be of importance prior to their enrolment at college. Transfer students appeared to be better informed than career students. The College Calendar was cited as the most accurate source of information overall, with College Personnel being the most important source for male students in schools not visited by college representatives.

Those students who had been visited perceived the College Calendar, Students, and College Personnel as accurate sources of information. Those who were late applicants cited College Personnel and Students as their most accurate sources, while early applicants chose College Calendar and College Personnel.

Overall, respondents strongly considered that the information they had received prior to enrolment was accurate. With reference to college picture prior to enrolment, over half the students considered that their college picture was accurate.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the problem and the methods used in the investigation; a commentary on the findings is also offered. Tentative conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further study appear at the end of the chapter.

SUMMARY

The Problem

The study primarily was designed to:

(a)   determine the sources of information which students used in finding out about their college,

(b)   determine the kinds of information discovered, and

(c)   obtain opinions as to the accuracy of the information discovered.   The study was conducted in two Alberta community colleges with the opinions of first-year students being sought.

The Procedure

A substantially open-ended questionnaire was devised and distributed to the two institutions in March, 1970.   An overall return of 39 percent representing 284 of a possible 836 replies was obtained.   Data were processed by computer, using a program to give frequencies and percentages of four dependent variables against the remaining independent variables.   Only those data which directly illuminated the main research

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questions were reported. Because of the very high percentage of the
respondents falling in the 18-20 age category, "Age" and "Years since
last attendance at high school or other educational institution" were
eliminated as variables.

Findings

The findings have been presented in terms of the research ques-
tion and variables in an attempt to identify what appear to be similar-
ities and dissimilarities between groups. The limitations of the re-
search procedures, the size of the sample, and the percentage of the
returns should be borne in mind when considering these findings.

Sources of first information. The results showed that the
sources of (1) Students, (2) College Personnel, (3) High School Person-
nel, (4) Parents and Family, and (5) College Calendar, as mentioned in
the literature, were also named by students in both institutions. The
most popular source was that of Students. The use of "Manpower" as an
additional source, especially for career students, should also be noted.
It must not be overlooked, however, that few students chose to name
extra sources of information other than those listed in the questionnaire.
Their responses may have been determined, to some extent, by the sources
named for their consideration.

Those students who had no previous contact with the college of
their choice, or who applied late relied, to a large extent, on unoffic-
ial high school or college sources such as Students or Manpower.

Sources actually used. The most striking finding was the popu-
larity of the College Calendar, especially with female and transfer stu-
dents who were visited and who had applied early. Late applicants

and those who were not visited also made use of the College Calendar as one of a wider variety of sources of information actually used in deciding to attend. A recognizable minority mentioned Manpower. The apparent failure of Mass Media to influence students was also evident.

Sources of the main kinds of information discovered. Over 60 percent of all respondents chose College Calendar as the source of the main kinds of information discovered by them prior to their enrolment at college. Support for this source was especially evident in the case of females and early applicants and least evident in the case of males and late applicants.

Awareness as to specific kinds of information. Overall, students claimed that they were aware of the items presented for their consideration. Exceptions were: How College is Administered, Regulations Re Exams and Marks, Attendance Policies and Financial Awards Available. Transfer students were better informed than career students on specific items such as Fees, Admission Requirements and Programs of Study. Those students who had been visited and who had applied early professed greater knowledge of the items presented for their consideration.

Most accurate sources of information. College Calendar was again ranked first by those students who were female, in the transfer program, had been visited, and had applied early. College Calendar was displaced by College Personnel and by Students in the case of male students who had not been visited and who had applied late. The high ranking of College Personnel by male students, and College Calendar by female students, was of interest.

<u>Most inaccurate sources of information</u>. In this instance, no sources were listed for students' consideration, and only ten respondents identified any problem areas.

<u>Overall accuracy of information received and overall accuracy of college picture prior to enrolment</u>. Students rated the information that they received prior to enrolment at college as being accurate; their rating of college picture prior to enrolment, a more subjective concept, was positive but much less certain.

CONCLUSIONS

From an examination of the data, the following conclusions appear to be warranted:

1. There are recognizable sources of information which students in this study used in finding out about their college. The role of Students, High School Personnel, College Personnel, Parents, and the College Calendar in acting as information sources, appears to have been substantiated.

2. While students claimed to have been made aware of their chosen college by means of a wide variety of sources, they relied most heavily on the college calendar as an aid in actually deciding to attend. They appeared to place more trust in this official source than in the others mentioned.

3. Transfer students seemed to have been better informed than career students, especially those that had applied early and were visited by college personnel. It may be that their choice of the

transfer program necessitated closer scrutiny of what the college

decision entailed, since it implies a commitment to university

education.

4. Some career students relied almost solely on Manpower for

information, often at a late date, for example, early September.

5. In general, students seemed to have been only moderately

well informed about specific items of information pertaining to the

college. Appendix B shows that there were additional items over

which they showed some concern.

6. Students rated the information furnished them, prior to

enrolment, as having been accurate. Less certainty existed in their

minds as to the accuracy of their total college picture prior to

enrolment.

7. The impact of college guest weekend and college promotion

through the mass media appears to have been minimal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the conclusions stated, the following recommendations

are offered:

1. Since there are recognizable sources of information which

students have recourse to for information, colleges should concentrate

on identifying, promoting and exploiting these. In particular, friends

might be enlisted as powerful sources of peer counseling for

prospective students in the fashion of the Miami - Dade College which

trains and uses high school seniors as college counselors. This might

be particularly valuable in the case of rural schools in Alberta.

Efforts should also be made to ensure that parents, teachers
and high school counselors have current information about the receiving
college institution. In the light of current research concerning the
timing of the college decision, colleges should concentrate more of
their promotion in the junior-high grades.

2. The prominence of the college calendar as the mainstay of
institutional promotion should be questioned. In its present form it
appears to appeal to a restricted cross section of students. Late
decision-makers and those remote from the institution do not appear to
benefit from it as much as they should. There is evidence that specific
items of importance to students, financial awards and grading procedures,
are not transmitted properly. It may be that information directed
towards more specific programs and capable of being easily updated,
would be of greater use.

3. Intensive counseling of students who apply late or who come
from institutions whose contact with the college has been poor should
be provided. This is especially important in the first few weeks.
The near unanimous criticism by first-year students of counseling
services at one of the institutions under study, underscores this
point.

In the case of Manpower students who are often "mature" students,
more cooperation with the Department of Manpower and Immigration
might help to lessen the shock of their late and often unexpected
arrival at college and remedy what many of these students claimed was
ignorance on the part of the Department of Manpower of the college's
function and their place in the institution.

4. An evaluation should be made of the effectiveness of college advertising methods. The impact of college guest weekend and mass media as advertising and recruiting vehicles for the colleges appears to have been almost non-existent. While the return from these media is almost impossible to compute, it seems that money might be better spent in employing a full or part-time public relations officer to interpret the college and its programs to the public and to prospective students.

5. For those students whose schools are too remote from the college to be contacted regularly, if at all, taped messages or recordings might be provided giving details of the colleges, courses, regulations, and programs available. More imaginative use could be made of existing college media resources to reach its non-urban clientele, while enabling information to be updated more easily.

The high school circuit rider, when he does succeed in visiting potential students in their high schools, must become more skilled at briefing counselors, teachers and students alike or make way for less expensive but more effective written media (pamphlets, flyers etc.).

6. The Colleges Commission might be encouraged to act as a supplementary, information-disseminating agency for the Alberta community colleges by facilitating and subsidizing the establishment of a colleges' "information-center."

7. Greater publicity should be given to sources of financial aid for potential college students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Some further studies which might prove worthwhile are suggested from an examination of the data.

1. A study investigating the rate of return from institutional advertising in the community colleges of Alberta.

2. A study of the image of the community college held by incoming students.

3. An investigation of the role of the mature student in the community college.

4. An in-depth study of the late-decider and his attitudes towards the community college.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

AND

CORRESPONDENCE

STUDENTS' SOURCES OF INFORMATION

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS DESIGNED:

      (A) TO DISCOVER ALL THE SOURCES OF INFORMATION
           WHICH ARE AVAILABLE TO AND USED BY COLLEGE
           STUDENTS, AND

      (B) TO DETERMINE HOW INFORMATIVE AND ACCURATE
           THESE SOURCES ARE.

IT IS HOPED THAT THE DATA WHICH YOUR ANSWERS PROVIDE WILL
ASSIST FUTURE STUDENTS IN MAKING THE BEST POSSIBLE
DECISIONS ABOUT ALL ASPECTS OF THE COLLEGE.

YOUR NAME IS NOT ASKED FOR, SO DO NOT BE AFRAID TO GIVE
FRANK, HONEST ANSWERS TO ALL QUESTIONS, PLEASE.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOME QUESTIONS DIFFER, SO PLEASE READ
THEM CAREFULLY.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

STUDENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Part 1 -- Personal Information

Directions: Please read the questions carefully and
insure that your responses are legible.

1.   Which of the following descriptions best fits the
     program in which you are registered? (check one)

     (a) Transfer   Intending to attend a University
                      or College after completion of
                      current college study.   [ ]

     (b) Career   Intending to seek employment
                      after the completion of a one
                      or two year college program.   [ ]

     (c) Other   Intentions undecided
                      Already employed full or part time [ ]
                      Casual student
                      Visiting Student
                      Special Student
                      Auditor

2.   Age, as of September 1, 1970:   Yrs. [ ]   Mths. [ ]

3.   Sex: Male [ ]   Female [ ]

4.   Name and place of high school or other educational
     institution last attended:

     _____

     _____

     Does not apply   [ ]

5.   Date of last attendance at above high school or other
     educational institution:

     Month [ ]   Year [ ]

6.   When did you apply for admission to this college?

   (a)   Before July 1, 1970   ☐

   (b)   July, 1970   ☐

   (c)   August, 1970   ☐

   (d)   After August, 1970   ☐

Part 11 -- Sources of Information

Directions: Please examine the following and select what you
consider were the *three most important sources*
in *first* informing you about the college.
Indicate your answer by inserting the correspond-
ing letters in the spaces provided, and/or by
writing in your choices if "Other" is applicable.

For Example: 1.__ D
2.__ K
3.__ __

Other:- Neighbour who had attended.

7.   A. Friends
B. Parents
C. T.V.
D. Radio
E. High school teachers
F. High school counselors

G. Member(s) of your family
H. Former college students
I. College counselors
J. College faculty
K. College team that visited your high school
L. Newspaper article
M. College guest weekend

N. College president
O. College registrar
P. Student(s) at present in attendance
Q. College calendar
R. Other (Please specify)

1. __ ☐

2. __ ☐

3. __ ☐

Other_____

8. Directions: Check the appropriate box or boxes.

    What sources of information did you actually use in deciding to attend the college?

    Please note that these may or may not have been the same sources from which you first *heard* of the college.

A. High school counselor ☐

B. College calendar ☐

C. High school teacher ☐

D. Other teacher(s) ☐

E. Parent(s) ☐

F. Present student(s) of the college ☐

G. Information provided by Registrar
   (excluding calendar) ☐

H. Newspapers ☐

I. Radio ☐

J. T.V. ☐

K. General information bulletins from college ☐

L. Letters from college ☐

M. Public advertising ☐

N. Own resources ☐

O. Advice of friend(s) ☐

P. Brother or sister ☐

Q. Other relative ☐

R. College guest weekend ☐

S. Visitation team from college ☐

T. Former student(s) of the college ☐

U. Student newspaper ☐

V. Other (Please specify): _____

_____

9. Of those used, the three most   1. ☐
    informative were:
                                        2. ☐

                                        3. ☐

    Other (Please specify): _____

    _____

Part lll

This part of the questionnaire is designed to discover more
about the information which you obtained about the college
before you decided to enroll.

10. Did the main kinds of information you discovered come
    from:

    (a) College calendar   ☐

    (b) Other sources   ☐

11. The following are some kinds of information sometimes
    available to students. Please examine each item and
    indicate, by checking the appropriate box, whether or
    not you were aware of it *before* you entered college.

                                              Yes   No

    A. Academic schedule (Timetable of year's ☐   ☐
       courses)

    B. Fees   ☐   ☐

    C. Admission requirements   ☐   ☐

    D. Requirements for your courses   ☐   ☐

    E. How the college is administered   ☐   ☐

    F. College regulations re exams and marks ☐   ☐

    G. Accommodation for out-of-town students ☐   ☐

    H. Programs of study   ☐   ☐

    I. Counselling services   ☐   ☐

    J. Attendance policies   ☐   ☐

    K. Financial awards available   ☐   ☐

12. Here are some items that students sometimes wonder about before they begin their courses at a college. Examine each one and please indicate, by checking the appropriate box, and by writing in where necessary, whether it was of concern to you *before you entered the college.*

	Yes	No

A. Staff Competence:

   1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

   2. Was it available to you? ☐ ☐
      If yes,
      what were the chief sources of information?

      _____

      _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

B. Differences between College and High School:

   1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

   2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
      If yes,
      what were the chief sources of information?

      _____

      _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

C. How Interesting the College Courses Would be:

   1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

   2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
      If yes,
      what were the chief sources of information?

      _____

      _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

D. Difficulty of Courses and Examinations:

		Yes	No

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

E. How Courses and Exam Work Would be Graded:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

F. Kinds of Exams and Assignments:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

G. How Friendly the Staff Would be:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

Did they prove to be fairly accurate? Yes ☐ No ☐

H. What the Students Would be Like:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
   If yes,
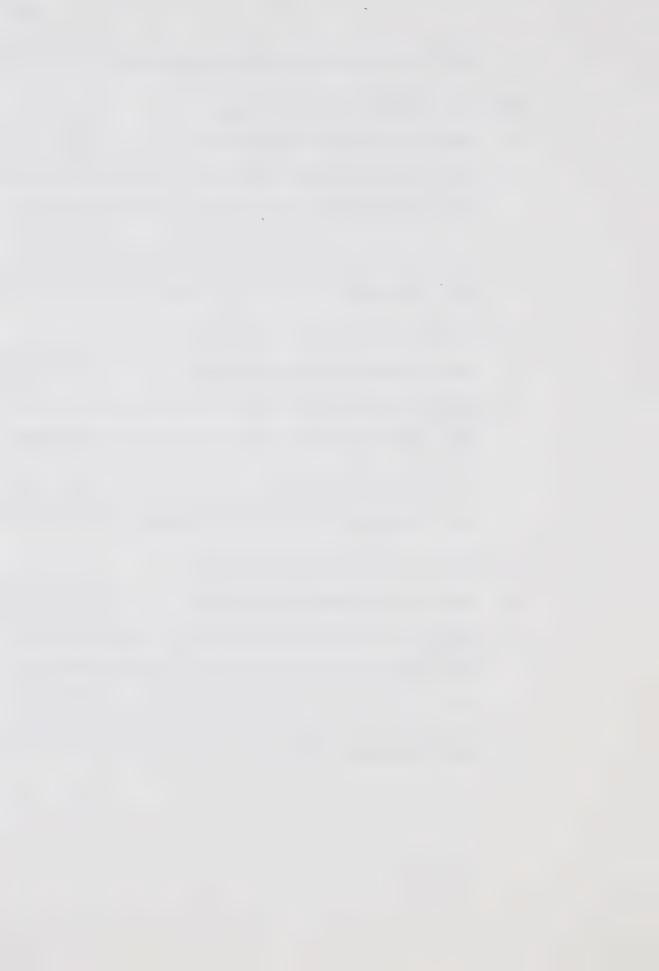   what were the chief sources of this information?

   _____

   _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

I. How Liable you would be to Succeed or Fail:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
   If yes,
   what were the chief sources of this information?

   _____

   _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

J. How Like a University it Would be:

1. Did you want this information? ☐ ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐ ☐
   If yes,
   what were the chief sources of this information?

   _____

   _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

Yes   No

K. How You Would Get There:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

L. What a College Really Does for a Student:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

M. Whether You Would be Able to Work While Attending
   College:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

Yes   No

N. College Policy on Changing Courses:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

O. If There Would be an Orientation:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

P. Possibility of Increased Academic Competition from
   Other Students:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
    If yes,
    what were the chief sources of information?

    _____

    _____

    Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

Yes   No

Q. How Well Would You Adjust:

    1. Did you want this information?   ☐ ☐

    2. Was this information available to you?☐ ☐
       If yes,
       what were the chief sources of information?

       _____

       _____

       Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

R. Social Life at the College:

    1. Did you want this information?   ☐ ☐

    2. Was this information available to you?☐ ☐
       If yes,
       what were the chief sources of information?

       _____

       _____

       Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐

S. Sports Facilities:

    1. Did you want this information?   ☐ ☐

    2. Was this information available to you?☐ ☐
       If yes,
       what were the chief sources of information?

       _____

       _____

       Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐ ☐
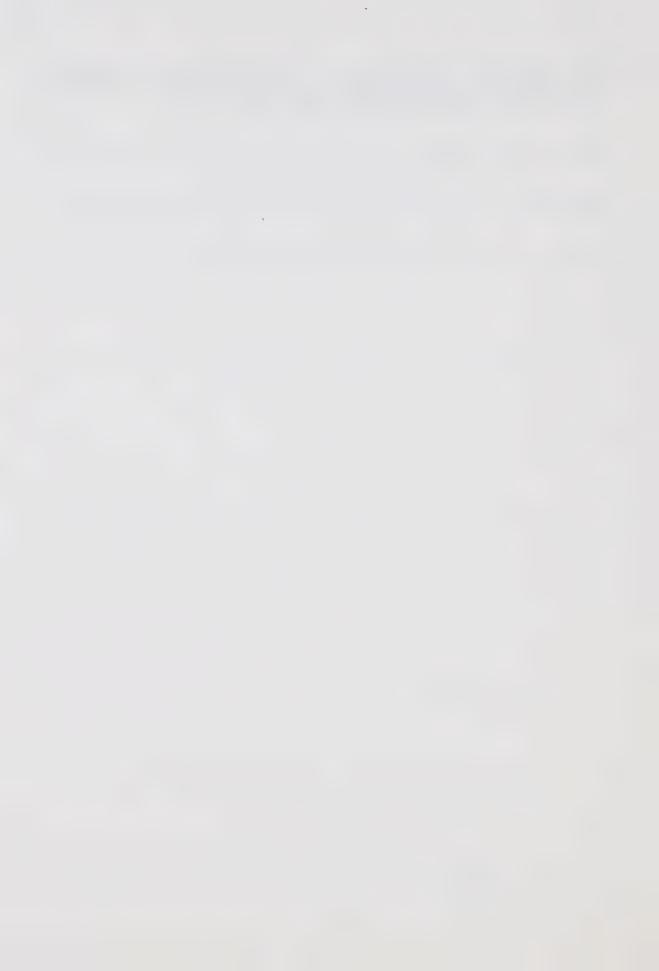
T. Counselling and Guidance:

1. Did you want this information?   ☐   ☐

2. Was this information available to you? ☐   ☐
   If yes,
   what were the chief sources of information?

   _____

   _____

   Did they prove to be fairly accurate? ☐   ☐

13. What were your three *most accurate* sources of
    information, in order of importance? (Please specify)

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

    What were your three *most inaccurate* sources of
    information, in order of importance? (Please specify)

    1. _____

    2. _____

    3. _____

    Do you consider that the information you received was,
    on the whole, *accurate?*

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    Do you consider that you had an *accurate* picture of the
    college before you began studies there?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

    Was your decision to attend the college pre-planned and
    not a last-minute choice?

    Yes ☐   No ☐

The researcher is planning an interview study to supplement the information gained from this questionnaire. If you would like to participate, please sign below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

January 25, 1970

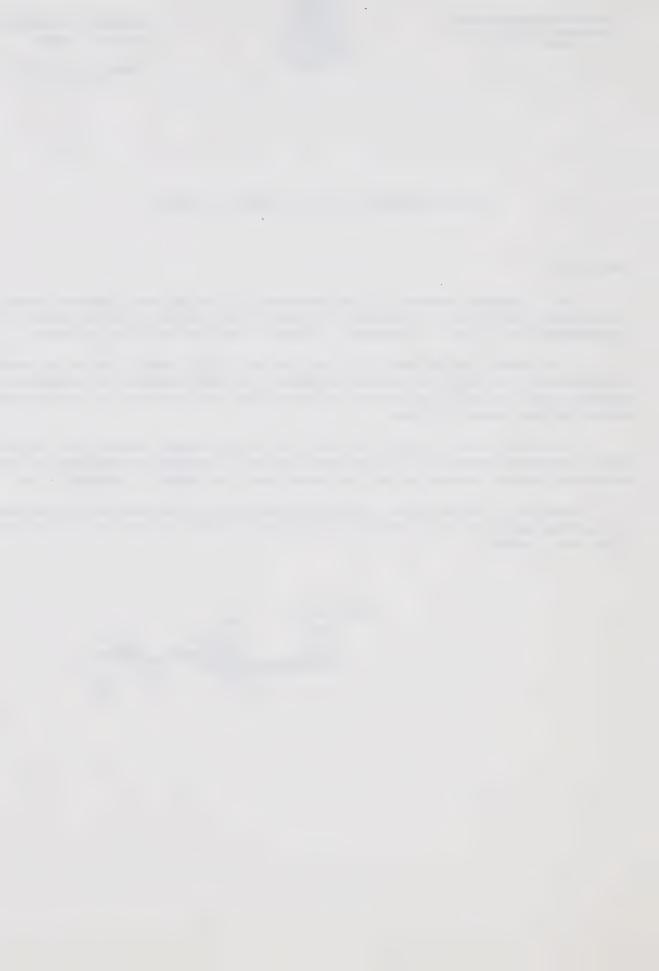TO THE PRESIDENTS OF THE STUDENTS' UNIONS

Dear Sir:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational Administration, University of Alberta. In connection with my M. Ed. thesis at this university, I am engaged in a study of students' sources of information about colleges.

It is hoped that information from this study will shed light on the sources of information available to college students, how comprehensive and informative they are, and how well they succeed in furnishing the student with an accurate picture of his chosen college.

I am sure you will appreciate that the well-informed student will probably make a better decision about his courses and will, through the accuracy of his knowledge, achieve a more successful transition from school to college life.

Therefore I request your cooperation and that of the students of the college in carrying out this study which will involve the participation of all present first-year students.

Sincerely,

Denis J. Haughey

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
ADMINISTRATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
EDMONTON 7, CANADA

January 25, 1970

TO THE PRESIDENTS OF THE COLLEGES

Dear Sir:

I believe that Dr. R. Bryce of this department has already contacted you personally and explained the nature of my research topic. I now write to give you some further information and to request the formal cooperation of the college in the study.

The study is designed to:
(A) Determine the sources of information which students used in informing themselves about the college,

(B) Determine the kinds of information found, and

(C) Obtain ratings of the accuracy of the information obtained.

I hope that by identifying and appraising these sources we may be able to help the student in making the best possible decisions about all aspects of his chosen college.

An analysis of the information sources may also help college authorities in assessing the effectiveness of the college's information media and methods. Appropriate changes, if indicated, might help to correct potentially erroneous conceptions of the college milieu as a whole. It is possible that the possession of accurate and current information may, through enabling better choices to be made, help to reduce the amount of student dislocation and institutional upheaval which might otherwise occur.

The proposed study will necessitate the cooperation of all first-year students and will probably involve thirty to forty minutes of their time.

Assuming your cooperation, I should be grateful for your suggestions as to the feasibility of administering the questionnaire in the college setting. The instrument will be ready in mid-February and I would like to collect the data as soon as is convenient for all concerned. Perhaps you could inform me of the numbers of first-year students, in all programmes, who would be involved, and your reactions to the study.
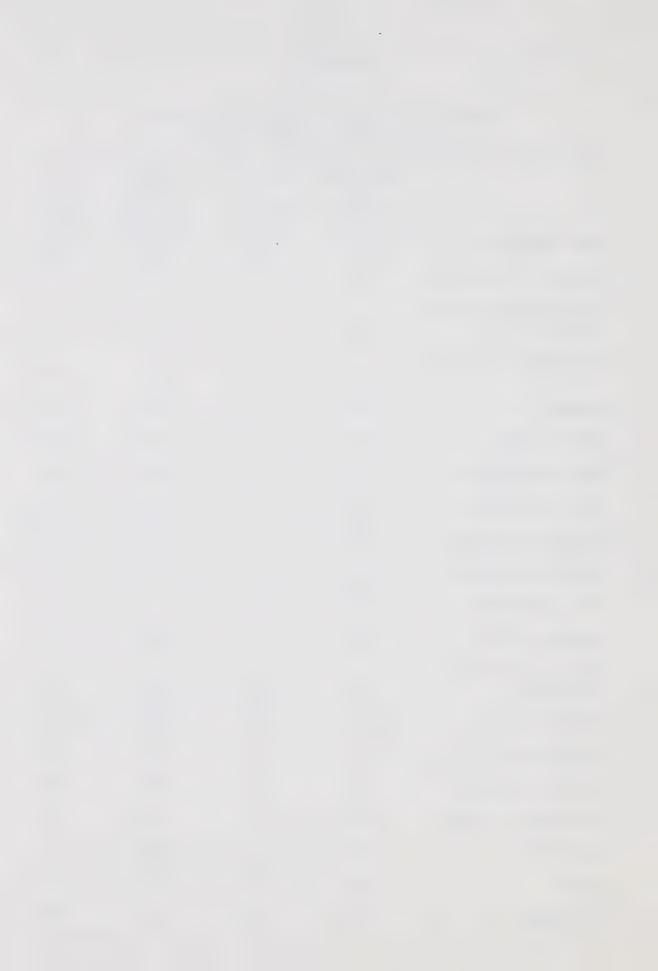
Sincerely,

Denis J Haughey

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APPENDIX B

STUDENTS' REACTIONS TO SPECIFIC ITEMS THOUGHT
TO BE OF SPECIAL CONCERN TO THEM

	Available and Accurate	Available and Inaccurate	Wanted but Unavailable	Not Wanted
Staff Competence	26.9	1.4	37.5	34.3
College vs. High School	28.7	2.5	30.9	37.9
How interesting college would be	36.4	3.2	40.3	20.1
Difficulty of college courses	22.3	4.2	45.9	27.6
Grading	32.0	2.5	36.6	28.9
Kinds of exams	16.9	1.4	50.7	31.0
Staff friendliness	19.0	0.7	25.4	54.9
Kinds of students	18.0	1.4	29.7	50.9
Liability to succeed	33.2	3.9	36.7	26.1
Likeness to university	25.4	1.1	28.5	45.1
How to get there	29.0	0.7	13.4	56.9
College's function	21.8	3.5	31.3	43.3
Ability to work while attending	17.6	1.1	20.4	60.9
Changing courses	31.6	1.1	20.9	46.5
Orientation or not	18.9	0.7	28.1	52.3
Academic competition	7.1	0.7	18.1	74.1
Adjustment to College	11.3	1.4	33.2	54.1
Social Life	39.2	1.1	19.1	40.6
Sports	39.7	0.7	13.8	45.7
Counseling	53.3	4.2	11.6	30.9